

Homeless Veterans Action Plan

**Washington State Department
of Veterans Affairs**

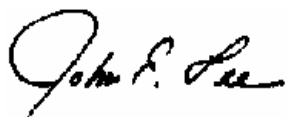
Serving Those Who Served



Beliefs and Commitment

We believe there are solutions to veterans' homelessness and that prevention is fundamental to breaking the homeless cycle. We believe that a coordinated approach between federal, state and local governments, coupled with our business community and agencies and organizations that serve the homeless, will reduce veterans' homelessness in our great state. We believe veterans who served our nation honorably deserve our help when faced with the conditions that cause homelessness or when they find themselves in chronic homeless conditions.

This plan is based on these beliefs and the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs' commitment to eradicate veterans' homelessness in the next ten years.



John E. Lee
Director



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Deputy Director



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■ INTRODUCTION

The homeless veteran population in Washington State ranges anywhere from 4,000 to 6,800 according to US Department of Veterans Affairs and the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans estimates. These figures fluctuate widely because there has not been a consistent statewide method to count the homeless.

On May 16, 2005, ESSHB 2163, Homeless Housing and Assistance, was signed by the Governor to become the Homeless Housing and Assistance Act. This act relates to the prevention and eradication of homelessness in Washington State in ten years. It gives the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development the leadership role to construct a statewide homeless housing program in collaboration with the counties and other strategic partners. Of significant importance are the ten-year plans counties will be submitting by the end of 2005, a funding mechanism through a real estate funding fee and a mandated annual census based on set requirements in RCW 43.63A.655. WDVA's success in the reduction and eradication of veterans' homelessness is interdependent with the coalitions and statewide homeless action plans being assembled as a result of the Homeless Housing and Assistance Act.

On October 5, 2005, WDVA committed to Governor Christine Gregoire during a Government Management, Accountability and Performance (GMAP) session to produce a plan by December 5, 2005 that will address and reduce veterans' homelessness in Washington State.

The first thirty days following the GMAP session were spent on a discovery journey. WDVA provides services and enjoys strategic partnerships with several state and federal agencies and numerous community providers. The Department produces respectable outcomes in the areas of prevention and intervention, but in order to take a big bite out of homelessness and make prevention the highest priority, we must join forces with the myriad of providers and public and private entities that serve the homeless. This means that WDVA will embark on the building of relationships and joining coalitions that will maximize currently available resources and services. The Department will participate in the Interagency Council on Homelessness, or like entity, to establish benchmarks, measurements and monitor statewide progress. We will provide our partners our expertise in the area of veterans' disability compensation and pension and other federal benefits. This will ensure that the federal resources for which veterans are eligible are leveraged resulting in savings that can be reinvested resources in the homeless community at large.

This document frames existing services and partnerships, as it is important to highlight and celebrate current successes in the areas of prevention and intervention. Regional funding and geographically limited grant opportunities have enabled WDVA to establish extremely successful projects and develop community

ties that will prove exciting to future partners. Current services will require expansion to ensure that proven programs can multiply statewide.

■ **VISION**

Every veteran has access to safe, decent, affordable housing with the needed resources and support for self-sufficiency and well being.

■ **WDVA OBJECTIVES AT A GLANCE**

- Develop a Coalition of key agency staff for coordination and information collection on existing homeless strategies and initiatives
- Pursue the establishment of the State's Interagency Council on Homelessness and secure a relevant role for WDVA
- Establish an operational lead to coordinate services with statewide homeless service providers
- Align WDVA with the Statewide 10-year plan
- Develop a veteran specific homeless veterans services scorecard
- Establish homeless veterans baseline data
- Identify and prioritize the needs of homeless veterans with a focus on federal benefits, housing, employment and mental health in partnership with state and local governments, appropriate federal agencies and community organizations that serve the homeless population
- Establish a Community Transition Program at the Veterans Home at Retsil
- Utilize WDVA's veterans benefits services to connect and track eligible homeless veterans to the benefits for which they are eligible

HOMELESS VETERAN PROFILE *

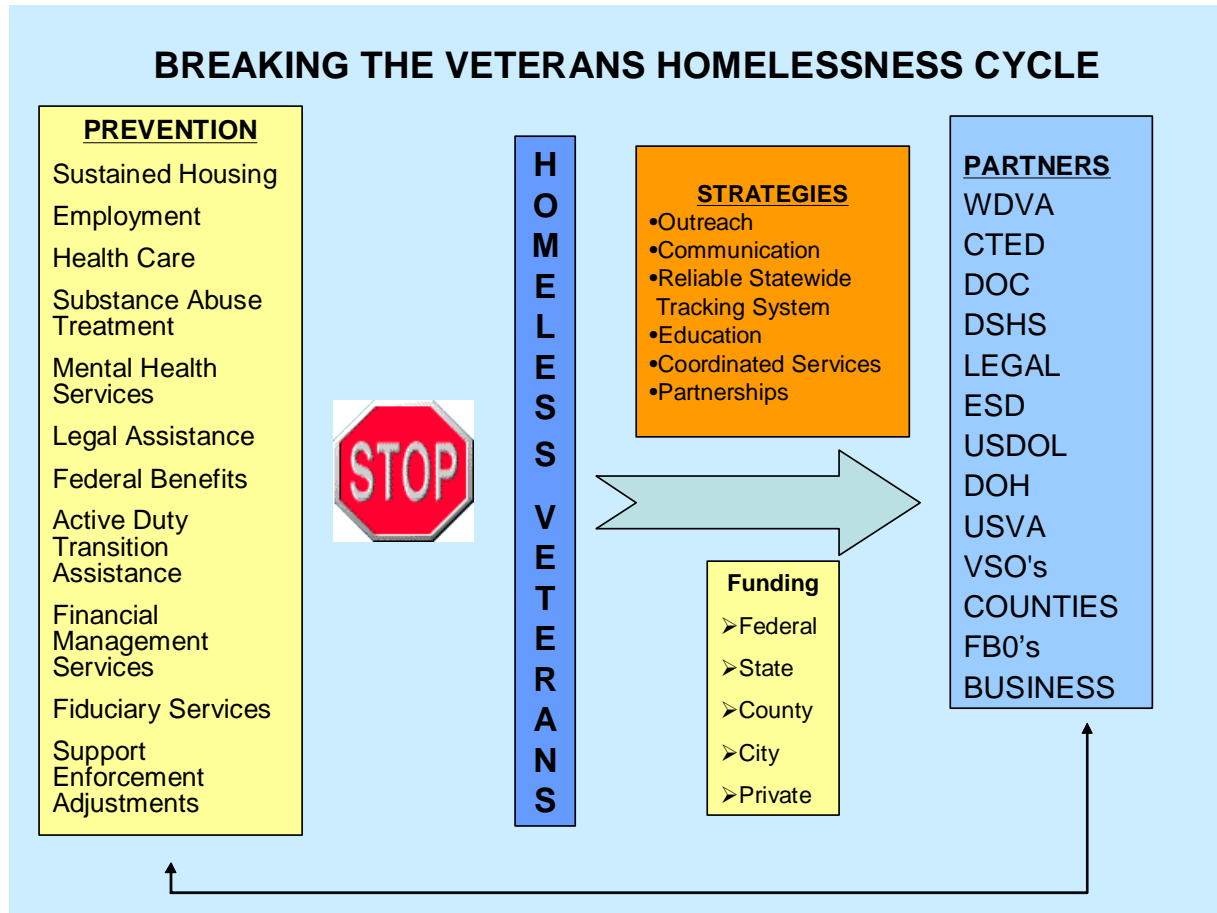
- 33% of adult homeless are veterans
- Single, Male, Age 56
- Unemployed
- Honorably Discharged (discharged under conditions other than Dishonorable)
- High School Graduate
- 10% Still Married
- 40% never married
- No Family Support
- No Transportation
- Need Medical and Dental Care

*National Coalition for Homeless Veterans

ADDITIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

- 50% served in the Vietnam War Era
- 4% are women; some have children
- 50% have addiction issues
- 45% suffer from mental illness
- 46% Caucasian, 45% African American, 5% Hispanic, 4% Native American

*National Coalition for Homeless Veterans



■ HOMELESS PREVENTION

It has long been argued the most effective strategy for addressing homelessness, for those at imminent risk, is to prevent its occurrence in the first place. This includes more systemic strategies that seek to prevent homelessness by ensuring people leaving institutions such as jails, prisons, foster care, the Juvenile Justice System, or treatment facilities, are not discharged to the streets or shelter system. WDVA, in partnership with King County, has a proven track record with their Veterans Incarcerated Program (VIP).

Prevention efforts also include strategies such as one time or short term rent or mortgage assistance, legal assistance programs, representative payee and direct payment programs, meeting transportation needs, and housing placement services. Programs at the county level, such as the Veterans Assistance Fund Program, provide financial support that alleviate acute and emergent situations; thus preventing homelessness. WDVA and its Veterans Estate Management Program serve nearly 700 veterans adjudicated as incompetent to manage their financial affairs by the US Veterans Affairs or Social Security. Most of these clients have long histories of chronic mental health afflictions, substance abuse, or exploitation by family members or acquaintances; and would be homeless without services that manage their living expenses and other financial obligations.

In addition, strategies to improve education and job skills and reduce domestic violence need to be addressed more extensively among the homeless. WDVA currently has two grants through the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP), a US Department of Labor program. One of the grants is for homeless women veterans, an emerging population that brings additional challenges as some have young children. The grants fund job training, temporary housing costs, tools, transportation, and/or work permits that enable veterans to rejoin the workforce and become productive members in the community.

WDVA'S HOMELESS SERVICES PRIORITIES

The national homelessness categories are established by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). WDVA's priorities are closely linked to these categories to ensure the most efficient use of our human and financial capacity and substantial impact to the statewide homeless problem.

Priority One - Temporary

Those who stay in the system for brief periods and do not return. This group consists of about 80% of the homeless and based on national research they consume about 32% of the resources devoted to support the homeless. Returning veterans from recent military deployments are often in this category.

Priority Two - Chronic

An unaccompanied individual with a disabling condition who has been homeless for a year or more, or those who have experienced at least four episodes of homelessness within three years. This group represents about 10% of the homeless and consumes about 50% of the resources supporting the homeless. A significant number (one third) are veterans.

Priority Three - Episodic

Those who move in and out of the system on a fairly regular basis over time and consist of about 10% of the homeless. They consume about 18% of the resources devoted to support the homeless.

CURRENT HOMELESS VETERANS SERVICES NETWORK

Part 1: Description

Service	Description	Eligibility Criteria	Target Audience	# Clients Served
Homeless Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of statewide homeless veterans' services are provided by the USDVA, WDVA, and Community Based Organizations (CBO). WDVA has diversified its efforts to become involved in homeless issues at the "grass roots" level by playing a support role to other homeless veteran providers throughout the state. The intent is to support services that remove barriers to obtaining employment, housing, and other entitlements needed for independent living. Other involvement in statewide homeless veterans' services includes regular support for Stand Downs (benefits and services fairs), rental payments for storage of employment support items and clothing. WDA also provides financial support to a number of homeless providers throughout the state. 	Homeless veterans discharged under honorable conditions and their family members (spouse and dependent children)	Veteran Reserves or National Guard Member Veteran's Dependents Surviving Spouse or Child of a Deceased Veteran	Approximately 2,963 homeless veterans were provided support during FY 2005

Part 2: Coordination

Service	Federal agencies	WA State agencies	Intra-agency	State homeless organizations	Local providers	Others
Homeless Services	VA Medical Centers Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seattle • Spokane • Tacoma • Walla Walla • Vancouver VA Vet Centers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bellingham • Seattle • Spokane • Tacoma • Yakima VA Regional Offices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seattle Department of Labor Department of Housing Urban Development (HUD)	Employment Security Department (LVER & DVOP) Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development Department Social and Health Services Department of Corrections Department of Health Department of Natural Resources Department of Fish and Wildlife State Parks and Recreation Department Washington National Guard	WDVA Veterans' Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field Offices • PTSD Program Counselors • Veterans' Estate Management Program (VEMP) • Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) • Veterans' Community Services Coordinators (VCSC) Washington Soldiers Home Washington Veterans Home Spokane Veterans Home	State of Washington Advisory Board on Homelessness Washington Low Income Housing Network Washington State Coalition for the Homeless		Veterans Service Organizations Washington Tribes Martin Luther King Ecumenical Center City and county governments, local homeless coalitions and federal counterparts National Council of Homeless Veterans County Veterans Coalition (CVC) Local Law Enforcement Agencies (Police, Sheriffs, etc.)

Part 3: Inventory

Provider	Location	Units/Beds	Type	Funding	Unit Description
Compass Center VVLP	King County	2 / 14	Group House	KCVP	
Compass Center Shoreline	King County	1 / 25	Transitional Housing	VA Grant & per Diem, KCVP, HUD-VA	
Salvation Army William Booth Center	King County	3 / 85	Transitional Shelter Transitional Housing	VA Grant & per Diem, KCVP, VA PSHCS	35-KCVP, 30-VTP, 20 VA ATC
Central WA Comprehensive Mental Health	Yakima	1 / 12	Transitional Housing	VA Grant & per Diem, Community Services	
Walla Walla HCHV	Walla Walla	4 / 40	Transitional Housing	VA Grant & per Diem, HUD-VA, WDVA	
Spokane REM	Spokane	1 / 30	Transitional Housing	VA Grant & per Diem, HUD	
Veterans Independent Enterprises of WA (VIEW)	Fife WA	0 / 20	Transitional Housing	501 (c) (3)	
WDVA Homes		2 / 86	Domiciliary and Assisted Living	GF-S, VA, Medicare, Medicaid	
WDVA HVRP	Puget Sound	102 Clients	Individual	DOL-VETS	
WDVA VEMP	Statewide	210 Clients	Individual	Clients	
VA PSHCS	American Lake	3 / 60	Domiciliary	VA	20-Hmls, 20-PTSD, 20-ATC
Vancouver SRO	Vancouver	1 / 61	Single Room Occupancy	VA Grant & per Diem, Clark County VAF, HUD, County Housing Authority	

Part 4: Service Outreach and Linkages

Service	Outreach to homeless veterans	Linkages to better serve homeless veterans	Barriers to serving homeless veterans	Constraints	Initiatives and Action Plans to be Developed
Homeless Services	<p>WDVA homeless veterans outreach helps in the identification of individuals and families in need of homeless services</p> <p>Outreach services are key to providing access to benefits and entitlements, homeless services and medical care for veterans and their family members in rural locations</p>	<p>Benefits and Entitlements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDVA Field Service Offices • Veterans Service Organizations (Post & Chapters) • VA Regional Office <p>Financial Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Veterans Assistance Funds (VAF) • VA Compensation and Pension awards • Federal and State benefits and entitlements • Local homeless service providers <p>Health Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VA Medical Centers • VA Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) • WDVA PTSD Program Counselors • WSH / WVH / SVH • Local service providers <p>Employment & Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESD & WorkSource 	<p>Communications with the mentally disabled</p> <p>Organizations do not want to get involved in programs that cost money and time with perceived little return</p> <p>Grant funding cycles are unpredictable, limited to year-by-year Funding, and are subject to political whim</p> <p>Perception that the homeless are not willing to help themselves and want to be supported by the government or community</p>	<p>Lack of staff and funding for case management</p> <p>General Fund - State budget is limited</p> <p>Grants require staff to manage programs and are not user friendly</p> <p>Limited availability of services in rural areas</p>	<p>Statewide Veterans Information System (VIS) for sharing demographic data and tracking services, needs, and outcomes</p> <p>Veterans service organizations human and financial involvement in homeless issues and programs</p> <p>Contracting with non-profit organizations that produce results in the rehabilitation and employment arenas</p> <p>Expanded efforts to access additional funding for rural homeless programs</p>

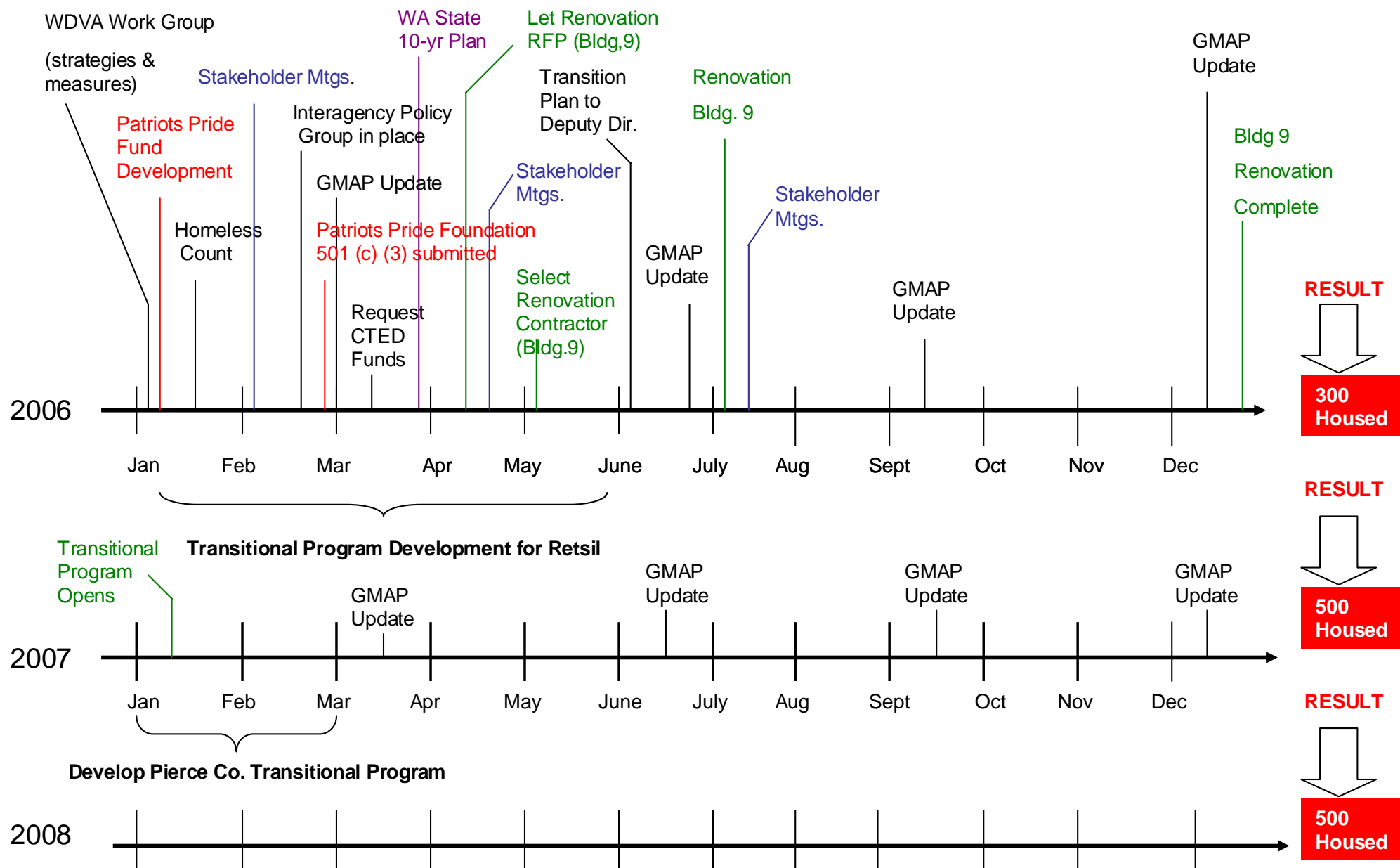
		<p>(LVER & DVOP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• WorkForce Programs (County level)• VA and State Vocational Rehabilitation <p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• WSH / WVH / SVH• Low Income Housing Network• VA Regional Office - Home Loans• City and county housing authorities• Local homeless coalitions• Community and Faith Based Organizations (CFBO)			
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WDVA Action Plan

Objective	Owner	Due Date	Status	Comments
1. Develop a coalition of key agency staff for coordination and information collection on existing homeless strategies and initiatives	Alfie Alvarado	Nov 05	Completed	
2. Pursue the establishment of the State's Interagency Council on Homelessness and secure a relevant role for WDVA	Alfie Alvarado	Jan 06		
3. Establish an operational lead to coordinate services with statewide homeless providers	Alfie Alvarado	Nov 05	Completed	Jerry Towne Designated Lead
4. Align WDVA with the Statewide 10- year Plan	Jerry Towne	Apr 06		
5. Develop a veteran specific resource network and a homeless veterans services scorecard	Jerry Towne	Mar 06		
6. Establish Homeless Veterans baseline data based on the statewide homeless count	Jerry Towne	Mar 06		
7. Identify and prioritize the needs of homeless veterans with a focus on federal benefits, housing, employment and mental health in partnership with state and local governments, appropriate federal agencies and community organizations that serve the homeless population	Jerry Towne	Jul 06		
8. Establish a Community Transition Program at the Veterans Home at Retsil	Jerry Towne	Jan 07		

9. Utilize WDVA's Veterans Benefits Services Network to connect and track eligible homeless veterans and family members to the benefits for which they are eligible	Jim Rising	Ongoing		Tracking mechanisms and measures will be established in the services scorecard
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Homeless Veterans Plan Timeline



Homeless Action Plans and Status Reports (Goal 1)

Develop a coalition of key external agency staff for coordination and information collection on existing homeless strategies and initiatives

AGENCY	POINT OF CONTACT	COMMENTS
Community Trade and Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victor Velasquez, Director, Economic Development Sue Mauerman, Deputy Director SueMa@cted.wa.gov Stephen Bauxbaum, Director of Housing 	
Department of Human and Health Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cathy Cochran, Housing and Homeless Program Coordinator cochrca@dshs.wa.gov 	
Department of Corrections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kathryn (Kit) Bail ksbail@doc.wa.gov 	
Employment Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sam Mack, LVER Smack@esd.wa.gov 	
US Veterans Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ann Sheehan, Director, Homeless Services Ann.Sheehan@med.va.gov Carol Hinds, Counselor, Vocational Rehabilitation Carol.Hinds@Med.VA.GOV 	
Office of Financial Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mark Rupp, WDVA Policy Analyst Mark.Rupp@ofm.wa.gov Kari Burrell, Governors Policy Advisor on Homeless 	

	KariB@ofm.wa.gov	
Department of Health		
County Veterans Coalition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joel Estey, King County Program Director 	
Employment Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sal Cantu scantu@esd.wa.gov 	
House Senate on Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rep. Mark Miloscia 	
Veterans Conservation Corps	Mark Fischer, Coordinator	
US Interagency Council on Homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paul Carlson Paul_Carlson@hud.gov 	
Thurston County Housing Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chris Lowell, Executive Director ChrisL@hatc.org 	
Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Council	Dick Whipple, VAAC Homeless Veterans Committee Chair	
Washington Coalition for the Homeless Coalition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corinne Knutsen, Executive Director 	
National Interagency on Homelessness, Washington DC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Janna Jahn, Homeless Plans, Janna.Jahn@usich.gov 	

Homeless Action Plans and Status Reports (Goal 2)

Pursue the establishment of the state's Interagency Council on Homeless or similar entity and secure a relevant role for WDVA

Actions	Contact	Status	Comments
1. Contact Rep. Mark Miloscia for information and suggestions on development of action plan	Mark Miloscia	Completed	Retooling 2163. Provided emphasis on the measurements portion for the statewide effort. Looking at WDVA to provide leadership in driving the homeless issue at large
2. Contact Governor's Policy office for information on Interagency Council status	Kari Burrell and Mark Rupp	Completed	Governor's policy office is working on an alternate arrangement that will establish an interagency work group
3. Contact CTED to understand the agency's coordinating role	Stephen Bauxbaum	Completed	Stephen is pursuing the formation of the interagency group. Explained the benefit of VA and our service providers as a way to leverage federal funding. He will ensure WDVA is at the table when CTED brings its key partners together